

REMARKS

In the May 31, 2005 Office Action, all of the elected pending claims (i.e. claims 1-7, 12-22 and 26-30 directed to the elected embodiment **I** of Figures 1-12) stand rejected in view of prior art. Also, claims 5, 17, 21 and 30 were objected to for informalities. Claims 8-11 and 23-25 have been withdrawn from consideration as being directed to non-elected embodiments of the present invention. Applicant respectfully requests that non-elected claims 8-11 and 23-25 be rejoined in this application upon allowance of a generic and/or linking claim or claims. No other objections or rejections were made in the Office Action.

Status of Claims and Amendments

In response to the May 31, 2005 Office Action, Applicant has amended the claims as indicated above. Also, Applicant has cancelled claims 2-4 and 18-20, and added new claims 31-36 as indicated above. Thus, claims 1, 5-17 and 21-36 are now pending, with claims 1, 16 and 17 being the only independent claims. Reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims are respectfully requested in view of above amendments and the following comments.

Claim Objections

In paragraph 1 of the Office Action, claims 5, 17, 21 and 30 were objected to because these claims include potentially redundant language requiring correction. In response, Applicant has amended these claims to remove the potentially redundant language. Accordingly, withdrawal of this objection is respectfully requested.

Also, claim 17 was objected to for an alleged error using the term "bores" in this claim. Applicant respectfully traverses this objection, especially in view of the clarifying amendments in claim 17. Specifically, Applicant has clarified that "the second internal bores are aligned with the first internal bores" in this claim. Claim 17 already required a plurality of first bores because this claim required a ***plurality of first tubular spoke attachment portions with each having a first internal bore***. Similarly, claim 17 already required a plurality of second bores because this claim required a ***plurality of second tubular spoke attachment portions with each having a second internal bore***. Thus, Applicant believes the term "bores" should not be changed to "bore" in claim 17. Such a change would be misdescriptive of the present invention. Accordingly, Applicant has not changed the

terminology in this claim as suggested by the Office Action, but merely clarified the terminology to avoid any confusion. In any case, withdrawal of this objection is respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and comments. If the language of claim 17 is still believed to be confusing or somehow inaccurate, please contact the undersigned for the appropriate correction.

Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

In paragraphs 4-6 (pages 2-5) of the Office Action, claims 1-7, 12-22 and 26-30 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,583,787 to Michelotti alone (claims 1-5 and 12-16), Michelotti in combination with U.S. Patent No. 6,216,344 to Mercat et al. (claims 6-7), Michelotti and Mercat et al. in further view of U.S. Patent No. 219,500 to Munson (claims 17-22 and 26-29), or Michelotti, Mercat et al. and Munson in further view of U.S. Patent No. 4,626,036 to Hinsberg et al. (claim 30). In response, Applicant has amended independent claims 16 and 17 to include the limitations of claims 3 and 19 respectively. Thus, claims 2-4 and 18-20 have been cancelled by the current amendment. In other words, claims 16 and 17 as now amended correspond to claims 3 and 19 as presented in the February 28, 2005 Amendment, respectively. Applicant respectfully traverses the above rejections as applied to claims 3 and 19 as presented in the February 28, 2005 Amendment (claims 16 and 17, as now amended). Independent claim 1 has been amended in a similar manner to more clearly distinguish the prior art.

Specifically, independent claims 16 and 17 require, inter alia, a plurality of first tubular spoke attachment portions heat fused to the outer annular portion of the rim and a plurality of second tubular spoke attachment portions heat fused to the inner annular portion of the rim. In other words, claims 16 and 17 require first and second tubular spoke attachment portions, which are **both** heat fused to the outer and inner annular portions, respectively. Clearly this arrangement is not disclosed or suggested in the Michelotti patent or any other prior art of record. Moreover, Applicants believe there is no suggestion or motivation to modify the rim of the Michelotti patent to result in such an arrangement as asserted in the Office Action.

The Office Action admits that the Michelotti does not show such a heat fused arrangement (i.e. where outer and inner tubular spoke attachment portions are heat fused to

the rim). However, the Office Action indicates that the Michelotti patent discloses the tubular spoke attachment portions being riveted to the *corresponding* portions of the rim, and that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to utilize heat fusing as an equivalent fastening means in order to form a permanent connection between the bushing and the rim, thus reinforcing the rim while eliminating friction or relative movement between the bushing and the rim (which would reduce wear on both the bushing and the rim). Applicant respectfully disagrees with this assertion.

The Michelotti patent *does not* disclose that "the tubular spoke attachment portions are riveted to the *corresponding* portions of the rim" as suggested in the Office Action. Rather, the Michelotti patent only discloses "**The bushes are apt to be riveted onto the inner element of the rim,...**" See lines 8-9 of the Abstract. Also, see column 6, lines 9-16 of the Michelotti patent where attachment to the rim is discussed. Thus, even if the riveting taught by Michelotti was replaced with heat fusing as suggested in the Office Action, *only the inner tubular bodies 7 of the bushes 4 would be heat fused to the inner rim element 2*. In other words, the Michelotti patent does not teach or suggest riveting of the *outer* tubular bodies 5 to the *outer* rim element 1. Accordingly, if the rim of Michelotti were modified to utilize heat fusing instead of riveting, *both* the inner and outer tubular members *would not be heat fused* to the outer and inner annular portions of the rim as asserted in the Office Action. Moreover, Applicant believes there is no suggestion or motivation to further modify the connections of the Michelotti patent to include an additional riveted and/or heat fused outer connection. In other words, any hypothetical rim suggested by the Michelotti patent, at best, would utilize heat fusing instead of riveting at the *inner* connection only. Thus, any such hypothetical rim would not result in all of the limitations of independent claims 16 and 17, as now amended. The remaining references relied on in these rejections do not provide for the deficiencies of the Michelotti patent with respect to claims 16 and 17, as now amended. Accordingly withdrawal of the rejections of claims 16 and 17 are respectfully requested.

It is well settled in U.S. patent law that the mere fact that the prior art can be modified does *not* make the modification obvious, unless the prior art *suggests* the desirability of the modification. The prior art of record lacks any suggestion or expectation of success for combining/modifying the above patents to create the Applicant's unique arrangement of the

plurality of outer and inner (first and second) tubular spoke attachment portions heat fused to the outer and inner annular portions, respectively.

Dependent claims 5-7, 12-15, 21, 22 and 26-30 are believed to be allowable for the reasons discussed above with respect to independent claims 16 and 17, from which they depend. Dependent claims 5-7, 12-15, 21, 22 and 26-30 are further allowable because they include additional limitations. Thus, Applicant believes that since the prior art of record does not disclose or suggest the invention as set forth in independent claims 16 and 17, the prior art of record also fails to disclose or suggest the inventions set forth in the dependent claims.

Independent claim 1 is believed to be allowable for the same reasons as discussed above with respect to independent claims 16 and 17. Independent claim 1 does not require a *plurality* of first tubular spoke attachment portion or a *plurality* of second tubular spoke attachment portions. However, claim 1 does require first and second tubular spoke attachment portions heat fused to the rim and defining a spoke receiving space with an internal surface configured and dimensioned to secure an end of a spoke within said spoke receiving space, at least one of said first and second tubular spoke attachment portions having a rim abutment surface that contacts a radially facing surface of the rim to limit radial movement relative to the rim. Even if the rim of Michelotti were modified to utilize heat fusing instead of riveting, ***both the inner and outer tubular members would not be heat fused*** to the outer and inner annular portions of the rim, as explained above. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of this claim is respectfully requested.

Conclusion - Prior Art Citation

In the Office Action, additional prior art of record are indicated as being pertinent to Applicant's disclosure. Applicant believes that these references do not render the claimed invention obvious.

New Claims

Applicant has added new claims 31-36 by the present Amendment. All of new claims 31-36 are believed to read on the elected embodiment ***I*** of Figures 1-12. New claims 31-36 depend from independent claims 16 and 17. Thus, new dependent claims 31-36 are believed to be allowable for the reasons discussed above with respect to independent claims 16 and 17,

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from which they depend. New dependent claims 31-36 are further allowable because they include additional limitations. In particular, new dependent claims 31 and 34 require at least one of said first tubular spoke attachment portions and said second tubular spoke attachment portions having a rim abutment surface that contacts a radially facing surface of the rim to limit radial movement of the rim, respectively, in a manner similar to independent claim 1. New dependent claims 32 and 35 require identical first and second tubular spoke attachment portions. This arrangement is not disclosed or suggested in the prior art. New dependent claims 33 and 36 require first and second tubular spoke attachment portions constructed of the same materials as the outer and inner annular portions of the rim, respectively. This arrangement is not disclosed or suggested in the prior art.

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In view of the foregoing amendment and comments, Applicant respectfully asserts that claims 1, 5-17 and 21-36 are now in condition for allowance. Reexamination and reconsideration of the pending claims are respectfully requested. If there are any questions regarding this amendment, please feel free to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,



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